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DEPARTMENT FOR D, A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: FM DENG ALOR ON ROME, ABYEI, AND "COLD" RELATIONS
WITH THE NCP

REF: A. KHARTOUM 461
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Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Sudan is likely to make some concessions on UNAMID deployment at the bilateral talks in Rome, such as agreement on the Thai and Nepalese troop contributions, FM Deng Alor advised CDA Fernandez in a meeting April 10. However Alor cautioned that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) is seeking to buy itself time with these talks, and is currently holding progress on critical issues such as Abyei hostage to the talks so that they can gain American concessions on the issues that matter to them most (getting off the state sponsors of terrorism list and eliminating some sanctions). There was no progress on Abyei and other issues at the Council of Ministers meeting April 9 for this reason. Alor said he is disappointed that the NCP hasn't taken the first step on embassy issues, since President Bashir promised him he would do so. Alor was pessimistic about the SPLM's relationship with the NCP, predicting the two would enter a long-term period of "cold relations." Alor said the NCP is likely to cheat on the census to gain an advantage in the elections and the next government, and then will likely try to manipulate the referendum which could lead to eventual unilateral action by the SPLM in violation of the CPA. Alor said the SPLM would likely send one or two of its members of the GNU to Rome, but did not yet know who they would be. End summary.

NCP Seeking Concessions, Prepared to Offer Some

[1](#)2. (C) In a wide-ranging meeting April 10, FM Deng Alor told CDA and polchief "don't be surprised if the NCP offers some real concessions" on UNAMID, including accepting the Thai and Nepalese troops at the talks in Rome, while being less forthcoming on humanitarian and political issues in Darfur. Alor was in a Council of Ministers meeting with President Bashir earlier in the day, and said the President had told him that "we will concede to the US on the Thais and the Nepalese but not to the UN" in order to gain concessions from the Americans. Alor said there was no progress on Abyei negotiations this week because the NCP wants to see what it can get from the Americans in exchange (getting off the State Sponsors of Terrorism List and reducing some economic sanctions). Alor said State Minister Ahmed Haroun, delegated the responsibility of negotiating an agreement on Abyei with Alor and Minister of Council Affairs Pagan Amun (Ref D) did not even bother to show up to a scheduled meeting the had arranged two hours before the Council of Ministers meeting.

But Beware the Stall Tactics

13. (C) Alor warned that the NCP is seeking to buy time with these talks. "They are regrouping their people in Darfur and seeking a military solution while they negotiate, just like the did with us in the South." Alor said the regime still believes that it can achieve a military victory in Darfur against the rebels and therefore is delaying a peaceful settlement. The possibility of a massive SAF response to a provocation by the JEM rebel group, as happened in February, is quite likely. Alor complained that the President refused to brief the Ministers (and hence the SPLM) on recent janjaweed activity in Darfur (Ref E) where pro-government militia rioted because they have not been paid. Alor said the agenda included only the Sudan Consortium (which the Sudanese have grudgingly accepted to occur on Oslo) after which the meeting adjourned without any discussion of Darfur, Abyei, or the upcoming meetings in Rome.

Pessimistic on NCP-SPLM Relationship

14. (C) Alor expressed pessimism about the trend of the SPLM-NCP relationship, predicting that the two could enter a long-term period of "cold relations." He based this assessment on the continuing tension on Abyei, the census, and elections plus the fact that President Bashir had just named a hard-line NCP confidante, BG Galwak Deng, a former pro-Khartoum Nuer militia commander, to be Governor of Upper Nile (where the SPLA has accused the SAF of deploying troops in violation of the CPA). He said the Governor is extremely loyal to Bashir (serving as Minister of Animal Resources from 2005 to 2007) and served with him in the military. Alor said the SPLM can work with the Governor ("his cousins are Dinka

from Bor") but it would not be easy as Galwak is being sent to "prepare the ground for increased illegal militia (OAGs or "Other Armed Groups"). Per the CPA, each side names one governor from their party in the other's region so the NCP names the governor in the southern state of Upper Nile while the SPLM currently holds the governorship in the northern state of Blue Nile.

15. (C) Alor also based his pessimism on the NCP's use of former Foreign Minister and SPLM renegade Lam Akol to destabilize the SPLM. "They should just make Dr. Lam a member of the NCP rather than using him to cause us problems" said Alor, noting that President Bashir himself had recently attended a large dinner in honor of Akol. CDA noted that these are both signs of the obvious NCP strategy of "war by other means" to destabilize and undermine the SPLM. This seeks to detach the oil-rich northern tier of the South - Upper Nile, Unity and parts of Northern Bahr al-Ghazal - and for such a strategy the NCP needs Shilluk (like Akol) and Nuer (like Galwak Deng) surrogates.

16. (C) Alor warned that the NCP's strategy on issues like the census and elections will eventually affect the survival of the CPA. An almost certain undercounting of the South will lead to southern constituencies in the new National Assembly of less than one third which would mean "even if we sweep the south," that the NCP will set a national agenda without an SPLM veto. This will allow the NCP to set unfair terms for the 2011 referendum. As both Alor and Amun told CDA earlier this week (reftels), such a scenario could lead to an SPLM Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) ahead of 2011, which would be a gross violation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Faced with such an eventuality, the SPLM may decide to forego elections and stake all on the referendum with the current, more favorable correlation of forces. CDA agreed that the NCP is likely to make separation and the referendum as difficult and painful as possible and they will only embrace elections "if they are sure of being able to win by cheating," which is a distinct possibility.

17. (C) The Foreign Minister described the April 9 day visit

of President Al-Bashir, NISS chief Salah Ghosh, Nafie, and Presidential Affairs Minister Gen. Bakri Salih to Asmara to visit President Afwerki as an NCP effort to "compare notes on Somalia and on Chad." He said that the Sudanese were supporting Eritrea's efforts to wreak havoc in Somalia by supporting radical Islamist insurgents. Alor also said that Eritrea had been moving anti-Ethiopian regime rebels from Eritrea down through Sudan to positions in Blue Nile and Upper Nile states opposite Ethiopia's western border with Sudan to "open a second front" to pressure the Ethiopians

US-Sudan Relations

¶18. (C) Regarding the US-Sudan bilateral relationship, Alor said he had discussed the talks with SPLM SecGen (and Minister of Cabinet Affairs) Pagan Amun and that both are frustrated that the NCP had not done more to show that it would take the first step as Al-Bashir had promised in February. Obviously feeling badly that he himself might have misled the US (and feeling nervous on the eve of the talks in Rome) Alor lamented that "we were genuine in our trip to the U.S. and we thought Bashir was going to respect his commitment." Alor described how he had convinced President Bashir to take the US seriously and do everything possible to improve relations now, including the NEC. "This is America" you are dealing with, Alor said he had told the President (and now Alor said Presidential Advisor Mustafa Othman Ismail reminds Alor jokingly of his "this is America" entreaty whenever they discuss bilateral relations with the U.S.) Alor commented that President Bashir told him he would give him a medal if relations with the US improve, something Lam Akol never accomplished, but now Bashir had taken to joking "I will kill you" if relations don't improve. Alor laughed when CDA Fernandez told him that of heads of state in recent memory, only Saddam Hussein had killed one of his ministers, "not a good model for Sudan to follow".

¶19. (C) Alor said that Al-Bashir seemed to have concluded that a rapprochement with the U.S. will be easy "although Dr. Nafie is not so naive." He thought it was good that the "hardest of the hardliners" was representing Sudan at this upcoming discussion. Alor added that the NCP's analysis was that the USG "really wanted a deal with the US" in order to secure a positive legacy for President Bush so extracting concessions while offering relatively little (except on UNAMID) would be an easy task. CDA reminded Alor that he had warned Nafie only a week ago, "not to toy with the Americans

the way you do with the SPLM or Chad in negotiations" (reftel B).

¶10. (C) Alor said the SPLM would send one or two of its members of the GNU to the talks in Rome, but did not yet know who that would be. When post checked with the MFA late in the day April 10 to see why the GNU had not yet submitted its visa applications to the Italian embassy, the MFA blamed the SPLM which it said had not yet provided passports for its members of the Rome delegation.

Comment

¶11. (C) Following his meeting with Secretary of State Rice in February, and his personal investment in trying to improve relations with the US (while seeking concessions on those items of interest to the US as well as the SPLM) FM Alor obviously feels a degree of personal responsibility for the success or failure of the talks in Rome. He clearly wants to be as helpful as possible to us in advance of the talks, sharing information that will be useful in our negotiating strategy such as the information that President Bashir had told him directly - that the regime would offer concessions to the US on the Thai and Nepalese troops in exchange for concessions from us. Alor's pessimistic view of the future of relations with the US is likely on target, but was also likely meant to serve as encouragement for the US to engage fully with the NCP to pressure them into living up to their

CPA obligations - chief among them elections, Abyei, and the referendum. The SPLM does fear an improvement in US-Sudanese relations delinking Darfur from the CPA where the Americans are enticed on issues such as UNAMID deployment and lulled into forgetting Abyei and similar issues of greater concern to the SPLM.

FERNANDEZ